

REMARKS

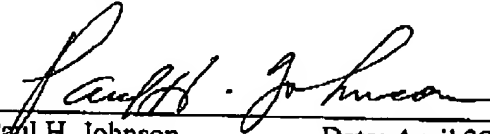
The claims have been amended in an effort to follow very helpful and perceptive recommendations by Examiner Paschall. Specifically, the claims have been amended to emphasize that the systems and methods covered in this application relate to insuring the qualifications of an unsupervised worker and that he or she has followed proper procedures in performing a covered task that is not subject to routine inspections. "Covered task" means a task for which regulatory authorities have established required standards of proper performance.

As pointed out by Examiner Paschall, the claims as previously entered did not properly distinguish over circumstances in which a workman performs a covered task under supervision and further did not accord with circumstances in which the worker's work was subsequently inspected. As mentioned to Examiner Paschall, the systems and methods addressed by this application have grown out of requirements that have been imposed by the Department of Energy (DOE). The DOE seeks to require operators of gas distribution systems to maintain documentation showing that covered tasks are properly performed and by qualified workmen. Such workmen typically performs without supervision and his or her work is typically not routinely inspected. Nevertheless it is important that documentation be available to show that all covered tasks have been properly performed by a qualified workman.

The cited prior art, including material relating to the Hobart Institute of Welding Technology and the patent to Schow et al., do not address these circumstances nor provide systems or methods that would respond to the current mandatory documentation requirements.

A serious effort has been made to place the claims in condition to clearly distinguish over the prior art. The helpfulness of Examiner Paschall is acknowledged with grateful appreciation.

Respectfully submitted,



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